

March 31, 2024

What Matters in Life Act 9:1-25, Philippians 3:1-11 Pastor Kirk Gambrell

Vol. 14 Num. 13

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

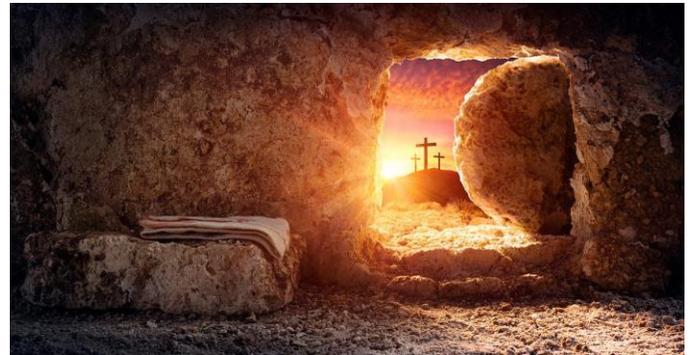
What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



This week as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus we will ask ourselves what really matters in life? Looking at 2 different passages about Saul, who becomes Paul, we can see what has true value. In his conversion, in Acts 9, we see that Paul gives up his pursuit to persecute the church and becomes part of the church. Paul then writes in his letter to the Philippians that most things of this world that we value are meaningless, and he pursues the power of the resurrection. Join us this week as we look at what really matters in our lives.

I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST AND THE
POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION
AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS
SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED
TO HIM IN HIS DEATH,
- PHILIPPIANS 3:10



The Conversion of Saul

9 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing out threats to murder the Lord's disciples, went to the high priest ² and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, either men or women, he could bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he was going along, approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵ So he said, "Who are you, Lord?" He replied, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting!" ⁶ But stand up and enter the city and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ (Now the men who were traveling with him stood there speechless, because they heard the voice but saw no one.) ⁸ So Saul got up from the ground, but although his eyes were open, he could see nothing. Leading him by the hand, his companions brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he could not see, and he neither ate nor drank anything.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias," and he replied, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ Then the Lord told him, "Get up and go to the street called 'Straight,' and at Judas' house look for a man from Tarsus named Saul. For he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him so that he may see again." ¹³ But Ananias replied, "Lord, I have heard from many people about this man, how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to imprison all who call on your name!" ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house, placed his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, his strength returned.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰ and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "This man is the Son of God." ²¹ All who heard him were amazed and were saying, "Is this not the man who in Jerusalem was ravaging those who call on this name, and who had come here to bring them as prisoners to the chief priests?" ²² But Saul became more and more capable, and was causing consternation among the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

Saul's Escape from Damascus

²³ Now after some days had passed, the Jews plotted together to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plot against him. They were also watching the city gates day and night so that they could kill him. ²⁵ But his disciples took him at night and let him down through an opening in the wall by lowering him in a basket.

True and False Righteousness

3 Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! To write this again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

² Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! ³ For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials ⁴—though mine too are significant. If someone thinks he has good reasons to put confidence in human credentials, I have more: ⁵ I was circumcised on the eighth day, from the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I lived according to the law as a Pharisee. ⁶ In my zeal for God I persecuted the church. According to the righteousness stipulated in the law I was blameless. ⁷ But these assets I have come to regard as liabilities because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things—indeed, I regard them as dung!—that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and be found in him, not because I have my own righteousness derived from the law, but because I have the righteousness that comes by way of Christ's faithfulness—a righteousness from God that is in fact based on Christ's faithfulness. ¹⁰ My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

o EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details from this passage.

Make 10 of your own observations from this passage. Avoid jumping to make interpretive decisions or drawing applications. Save those for the sections that follow. At this point just observe this passage and what it says. Look for things that are emphasized, repeated, and what stands out to you. Look at the verbs, what actions are in the text? Who is involved in the text? There is no right or wrong answer, just list 10 things you see in the text.

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🕒 **EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)** (For Community Group discussion)

What does God MEAN?

1. In the beginning of Act 9 why was Saul threatening to murder the disciples?
2. How was Saul persecuting Jesus?
3. What does Saul who becomes Paul do immediately after regaining his sight? What does he proclaim?
4. Why are people amazed at Saul's proclamations?
5. In Philippians 3 what are Paul's human credentials?
6. What does Paul regard as a liability?
7. What is the power of the resurrection that Paul refers to?

